

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, claims 1, 3, 10, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 10-166705* (hereinafter "*JP '705*"), and claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *JP '705* in view of *Asano et al.*

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Minh Chau for the courtesies extended to their representative, Attorney Gay Ann Spahn, during an interview conducted on Tuesday, May 13, 2003. During the interview, Attorney Spahn proposed two different amendments to claim 1. Examiner Chau felt the second proposed amendment to claim 1 would overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) anticipation rejection based upon *JP '705*. However, Examiner Chau proposed further claim language in order to clearly define the scope of the invention and overcome the prior art.

Claims 4-9 and 13-20 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 1, 3, and 10-12 have been amended. More particularly, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that a position of the guide path is above the press roller during either double-sided or multi-color printing operations.

As a quick synopsis of the applied prior art references, Applicants hereby refer to the abstracts of *JP '705* and *Asano et al.*, as follows:

JP '705 discloses that the problem to be solved is to prevent bleeding and setoff by forming at least the surface of an intermediate transfer body of a material having a solvent permeating property, and providing a cleaning means to clean the surface of the intermediate transfer body after transfer without using a cleaning liquid. As a solution to the problem, a stencil printer is provided with a cylinder (2), an intermediate transfer body (4) pressed against the cylinder (2), a transfer-compression roller (8) as a pressing means that presses

paper (6) against the transfer body (4), and a cleaning device (10) that cleans the surface of the transfer body (4) after transfer. The intermediate transfer body (4) is formed of a silicone rubber layer as a material having a solvent permeating property in the surface and makes possible to transfer an ink image to the paper (6) in a state of having less oily components. The cleaning device (10) is composed of a cleaning roller (32), a squeezing roller (34) that contacts the roller, and a casing (36) that stores removed ink, and ink is removed with a brush roller as the cleaning roller (32).

Asano et al. discloses a recording system including a recording head for performing recording on a sheet, a first rotary member disposed at a downstream side of the recording head and contacting an unrecorded surface of the sheet on which the recording is performed by the recording head and adapted to apply a feeding force to the sheet, and a second rotary member being provided at its peripheral surface with a plurality of teeth and contacting a recorded surface of the sheet with the tips of the teeth thereof, and cooperating with the first rotary member to feed the sheet. The plural teeth of the second rotary member are staggered with other teeth in a direction transverse to a sheet feeding direction. A member is provided to clean the first and second rotary members.

JP '705 and *Asano et al.* fail to teach or suggest that a position of the guide path is above the press roller during either double-sided or multi-color printing operations.

More particularly, Applicants respectfully submit that Fig. 1 of *JP '705* clearly illustrates the guide path (6) is between the intermediate transfer body (4) and the transfer compression roller (8), but not above the intermediate transfer body (4).

On page 10, line 23 through page 14, line 16, the present specification describes in detail the performance during both double-sided and multi-color printing operations. More particularly, during a double-sided printing operation, the printed sheet 3 is set on the paper

supply tray 4 with the printed side facing downwardly so that at the time of conveying the printed sheet 3, the lower resist roller 11b and the press roller 2 come into contact with the printed side of the printed sheet 3. When the printed side of the printed sheet 3 is not yet dry, the undried ink is transferred to the peripheries of the resist roller 11b and the press roller 2. The undried ink transferred onto the peripheries of the resist roller 11b and the press roller 2 is spread thinly on the contact part between the periphery of the resist roller 11b and the periphery of the removing roller 12 and on the contact part between the periphery of the press roller 2 and the periphery of the removing roller 12 so that a part of the undried ink is transferred to the periphery of the removing roller 12. In other words, the removing roller 12 removes the part of the undried ink from the peripheries of the resist roller 11b and the press roller 2. Consequently, since the undried ink transferred onto the peripheries of the resist roller 11b and the press roller 2 is transferred to the peripheries of the removing rollers 12, the amount of ink on the peripheries of the resist roller 11b and the press roller 2 is reduced. The ink is thinly spread and the area of the ink in contact with the air increases so that the ink is dried more quickly. The retransfer of the undried ink, passed to the peripheries of the resist roller 11b and the press roller 2, is suppressed to the printed side of the printed sheet 3 so that the printed sheet 3 will not be smudged.

A similar phenomenon occurs during multi-color printing between the pick-up roller 8, separation roller 9, and resist roller 11a, but the undried ink on the printed sheet 3 is on the top side thereof.

The printing processes occurring in *JP '705* and *Asano et al.* are clearly concerned with only single sided printing and thus, Applicants respectfully submit that *JP '705* and *Asano et al.* were never concerned with the problem of retransfer smudging occurring during double-sided and multi-color printing operations, as is the present invention.

Applicants respectfully submit that *JP '705* does not either alone anticipate or in combination with *Asano et al.* render obvious amended claim 1 and therefore, amended claim 1 should be allowed.

With respect to claim 3, the Office Action points out that one of ordinary skill in the art would understand that the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* rotates in accordance with the rotation of the intermediate transfer body (4). Applicants respectfully submit that *JP '705* does not show that its cleaning or brush roller (32) rotates in accordance with the rotation of the intermediate transfer body (4). The cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* cannot scrape ink off of the outer periphery of the intermediate transfer body (4) if the cleaning or brush roller (4) rotates in accordance with the rotation of the intermediate transfer body (4) because the cleaning or brush roller (32) needs to rotate in the opposite direction of the rotation of the intermediate transfer body (4) in order to effect the scraping off of the ink from the outer periphery. Therefore, the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* does not rotate in accordance with the rotation of the intermediate transfer roller (4), but rather the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* rotates in a direction opposite to the direction of rotation of the intermediate transfer body (4) and rotates at a rotative velocity different from the rotative velocity of the intermediate transfer body (4) since the two are of different diameters. Claim 3 has been amended to clarify that the fact that the removing roller rotates in accordance with the rotation of the rotating roller means that the removing roller and rotating roller both rotate in the same rotative direction and at the same rotative speed.

With respect to claim 10, the present invention has a pair of resist rollers which feed the sheet conveyed thereto to the printing unit at a proper timing. *JP '705* does not teach or suggest a pair of resist rollers.

With respect to claim 12, *JP '705* does not teach or suggest that the pair of resist rollers are rotated at a time of making a master by a master making mechanism contrary to the Office Action's allegation that it does.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *JP '705* in view of *Asano et al.* More particularly, Applicants respectfully submit that *JP '705* cannot be modified by *Asano et al.* in the manner set forth in the Office Action for the reason as follows.

JP '705 discloses a cleaning roller (32) implemented as a brush roller. The Office Action alleges that the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* is the equivalent of the removing roller (12) of the present invention. However, even assuming *arguendo* that the device of *JP '705* could be modified to replace the intermediate transfer body (4) as the rotating roller with the resist rollers (104, 105) that are rotated not only at the time of conveying a printed sheet of *Asano et al.* as suggested by the Office Action (which Applicants are not arguing that such a modification would be possible), the modified device would still include the cleaning or brush roller (32) of *JP '705* which is not capable of spreading and drying the ink on the outer periphery of the intermediate transfer body (4) as is recited by the present invention. In other words, neither *JP '705* nor *Asano et al.* ever contemplated providing a stencil printer with a removing member which functions to spread and reduce ink transferred to the rotating roller so that the ink on the outer periphery of the rotating roller can be dried quickly. Additionally, *JP '705* is not capable of being modified by the *Asano et al.* reference in the manner suggested by the Office Action because the intermediate transfer body (4) of *JP '705* could not be replaced by the resist rollers (104, 105) of *Asano et al.* without the modified device being unable to function for its intended purpose.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to claims 1, 3, and 10-12 do not add new matter. Applicants also respectfully submit that claims 3 and 10-12 are either directly or indirectly dependent upon independent claim 1 so that arguments serving to patentably distinguish independent claim 1 from the prior art of record are available, among others, to patentably distinguish claims 3 and 10-12. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), and 35 U.S.C. §103(a), and allowance of claims 1, 3, and 10-12.

In view of the present amendment, claims 1, 3, and 10-12 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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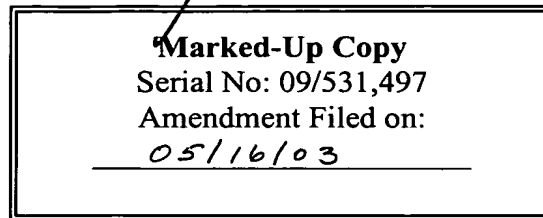


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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 3, and 10-12 , as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A stencil printer comprising:

a printing unit [for printing] configured to print an image on a sheet of paper;

a guide path [for guiding] along which the sheet of paper [along a] is guided [path of which] to the printing unit[is disposed];

[a] at least one rotating roller disposed [in] adjacent to the guide path and [contributes to carry] configured to aid in guiding the sheet of paper along the guide path, the at least one rotating roller constituting at least a press roller and a position of the guide path being above the press roller during either double-sided or multi-color printing operations; and

[a] at least one removing roller [which is] in contact with [the] an outer periphery of the at least one rotating roller and [which rotates so as] configured to rotate in order to both spread and reduce ink transferred to the at least one rotating roller so that the ink on the outer periphery of the at least one rotating roller can be dried quickly.

3. (Twice Amended) The stencil printer according to claim 1, wherein the at least one removing roller rotates in accordance with the rotation of the at least one rotating roller in that the at least one removing roller rotates in a same rotative direction and at a same rotative velocity as the at least one rotating roller.

10. (Twice Amended) The stencil printer according to claim 1, wherein in addition to the press roller, the at least one rotating roller [is] also constitutes a pair of resist rollers.

11. (Twice Amended) The stencil printer according to claim 10, wherein the pair of resist rollers are rotated not only at [the] a time of conveying a printed sheet.

12. (Twice Amended) The stencil printer according to claim 10, wherein the pair of resist rollers [is] are rotated at [the] a time of making a master by a master making mechanism.